

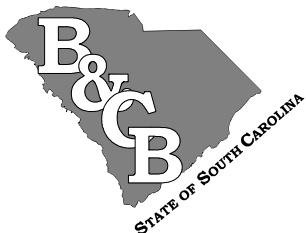
HEALTH

Defining Lupus

Lupus is a type of immune system disorder known as an autoimmune disease. In autoimmune diseases, the body harms its own healthy cells and tissues. This leads to inflammation and damage of various body tissues. Lupus can affect many parts of the body, including the joints, skin, kidneys, heart, lungs, blood vessels and brain. Although people with the disease may have many different symptoms, some of the most common ones include extreme fatigue, painful and swollen joints (arthritis), unexplained fever, skin rash and kidney problems.

Types of Lupus

1. Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), which is the form of the disease that most people are referring to when they say "lupus." The word "systemic" means the disease can affect many parts of the body. The symptoms of SLE may be mild or serious. Although SLE usually first affects people between the ages of 15 and 45 years, it can occur in childhood or later in life as well.
2. Discoid lupus erythematosus primarily affects the skin. A red raised rash may appear on the face, scalp, or elsewhere. The raised areas may become thick and scaly. The rash may last for days or years and may recur. A small percentage of people with discoid lupus later develop SLE.
3. Drug-induced lupus refers to a form of lupus caused by medication. It causes some symptoms similar to those of SLE (arthritis, rash, fever and chest pains but not kidney disease) that go away when the drug is stopped.
4. Neonatal lupus can affect some newborns of women with SLE or certain other immune system disorders. Babies with neonatal lupus may have a serious heart defect. Other affected babies may have a skin rash, liver abnormalities, or low blood counts. Neonatal lupus is very rare and most infants of mothers with SLE are entirely healthy.



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